

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Submitted herewith is a replacement sheet for Fig. 5 incorporating a revision to label the equatorial centerplane EP described on page 8 of the specification.

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and second paragraph, for indefiniteness. The amendments to the specification, abstract and drawings submitted with the December 13, 2005 response were objected to as introducing new matter into the originally filed disclosure. Claims 1-12 were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. JP 8-156502 ("Japan '502") in view of applicants' prior art disclosure in Figs. 11A-11B ("APD"). Claim 1 was indicated to be allowable if amended as noted by the Examiner in section 9 of the Office Action.

Applicants and applicants' counsel note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to independent claim 1 if amended as noted by the Examiner in section 9 of the Office Action. As discussed in detail below, applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 1-4, 7-9, 11 and 12 recite subject matter which patentably distinguishes the claims from, and are therefore allowable over, the prior art of record.

In accordance with the present response, the specification has been suitably revised to overcome the new matter objection raised by the Examiner. In this regard,

paragraph [0037] of the specification has been amended to clarify the description relating to the symmetrical feature of the depressed portions 118, 121. More specifically, paragraph [0037] has been amended to describe that each of the depressed portions 118, 121 is symmetrical about a line extending through a longitudinal center thereof and crossing the equatorial centerplane EP. This feature is supported by Figs. 5 and 7 as originally filed. Paragraph [0033] of the specification has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection by clarifying that the equatorial line EP of the tire 102 crosses each of the first and second lugs 104, 105 in a circumferential direction of the tire 102.

Consistent with the foregoing amendments to the specification, the proposed drawing revision to Fig. 5 has been re-submitted herein to show the centerplane EP while omitting the line L crossing the equatorial centerplane. The abstract has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection by clarifying the description relating to the "approximate center", "corresponding side and end surfaces", and "generally spherical-shaped" in order to conform to the revisions to the amended claims as set forth below.

Claims 1-4, 7-9, 11 and 12 have been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, first and second paragraphs, and to conform to the revisions to the

specification. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to change "approximate center" to "center" and "generally spherical-shaped" to "substantially spherical-shaped." These revisions are fully supported by paragraphs [0033], [0036] and [0037] of the specification as originally filed. Claim 9 has also been revised to clarify that the spherical-shaped depressions are formed by corresponding side and end surfaces of the first and second lugs and corresponding surfaces of the tire tread.

Claim 2 has been amended by rewording the feature of the adjacent first lugs being disposed in "overlapping relation" with the second lug as the adjacent first lugs being "spaced apart, in the circumferential direction of the tire tread, from the first lug." Claims 3 and 11 have been amended to clarify that the equatorial centerplane of the wheel tire crosses each of the lugs in a circumferential direction of the wheel tire. Claims 4, 7 and 12 have been amended to conform to the foregoing amendment to paragraph [0037] of the specification by reciting that each of the first and second depressed portions is symmetrical about a line extending through a longitudinal center thereof and crossing the equatorial centerplane. This feature is supported by Figs. 5 and 7 as originally filed. Claim 8 has been amended to clarify that each of the first and second lugs has a flat

outer tread, as noted by the Examiner in section 2 of the final Office Action.

In the final Office Action (section 9), the Examiner advised that independent claim 1 would be allowed if amended to define the structure of the spherical-shaped depression portions as disclosed in Figs. 5-7 and described in paragraphs [0033]-[0037] of the specification. This specific structure of the depression portions corresponds, for example, to the arc-shaped contours 111, 112 which are formed by surfaces of adjacent lugs 104A, 105A, 105B of the tire tread 103.

Independent claim 1 has been amended as proposed by the Examiner in section 9 of the final Office Action by reciting the structure of the substantially arc-shaped contours forming the spherical-shaped depression portions. Independent claim 9 has been similarly revised, including the incorporation of the subject matter of claim 10, to further patentably distinguish from the prior art of record. Claims 5, 6 and 10 have been canceled, thereby rendering the section 112 and prior art rejections of these claims moot.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs, and the objection to the December 16, 2005 amendment under 35 U.S.C. §132(a) have been overcome and should be withdrawn. Furthermore, independent claims 1

and 9 have been amended as proposed by the Examiner in section 9 of the final Office Action to patentably distinguish from the prior art of record, thereby placing independent claims 1 and 9 and corresponding dependent claims 2-4, 7-8 and 11-12 in condition for allowance.

Applicants most respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments since they merely comprise amendment of the specification to overcome the Section 132(a) objection, amendment of claims 1-4, 7-9, 11 and 12 to overcome the Section 112, first and second paragraph, rejections and to incorporate the allowable subject matter proposed by the Examiner in section 9 of the final Office Action, and amendment of the abstract and drawings to conform to the revisions to the specification and claims. In addition, the amendments substantially narrow any appealable issues because they cancel a number of other claims. Thus, entry of the foregoing amendments does not impose a burden on the Examiner and should not be denied.

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion,
the application is believed to be in allowable form.
Accordingly, entry of this amendment and favorable
reconsideration and allowance of the claims are most
respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date indicated below.

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Signature

JUNE 5, 2006

Date